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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the three types of nonformal and informal professional development provided by teachers' organizations. The first type is a minimal approach, the second focuses on contextual variation and teacher diversity, and the third consists of informal learning opportunities developed by teachers themselves. The article identifies strategies for improving the "fit" between available professional development and teachers' occupational needs. Rather than recommending a single, "best" professional-development strategy, the paper emphasizes sociological and organizational factors germane to teachers' organizations themselves, such as the teacher organizations' role in teacher socialization, the demographics of teacher organization participation, and internal structural features. These factors suggest that teachers' organizations must look within at a variety of organizational issues and consider a wide variety of organizational strategies simultaneously. The report draws from conceptual and empirical research on national, state/provincial, and local teacher union reform activities; on teachers' perceptions of their organizations; and on teachers' past involvement with their organizations. It examines the tradition of teacher professional development and concludes by suggesting that teachers' organizations move away from policies of discrete and limited professional development events to consider a variety of organizational sites as potentially useful for teacher learning. (RJM)

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EQUATION: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF TEACHER UNIONS

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N. Bascia

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> The union [leaders] say they share a common desire: . . . to craft a new vision of teachers' unions, in tune with changes both in education and in the teaching profession. . . . [T]eachers themselves can be reluctant to think of their jobs in new ways, [the president of Greece, NY teachers' association] said, adding that professional development is essential in helping teachers make such transitions. [These union] leaders, in fact, have talked about ways to encourage teachers' unions to take a greater role in honing their members' knowledge and skills.
>
> -- "Network Seeks Union Role in Reform Efforts," Education Week, May 8, 1996

> In some ways the professional development unit drives the whole organization. I believe the future of the ATA depends on professional development.
>
> -- staff member, Alberta Teachers' Association, September 1998

In the U.S. and Canada, teachers' organizations (unions, federations, or associations) are focusing increased attention on their membership. In Canada in recent years, the diminishing of teacher federations' legal authority and a reduction of the infrastructure that supports teaching have been felt across the entire country (Bascia, 1998b; Earl, Bascia, Hargreaves & Jacka, 1998), forcing organization officials to rethink what they can do on teachers' behalf. In the U.S., many national, state and local teacher union leaders are involved in efforts to professionalize teaching; these strategies, however, are not uniformly popular with teachers. A local union leader, speaking on behalf of fellow members of the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN) recently said, "Each of us has been under attack by our own membership for stands we've taken" (Bradley, 1996). While Canadian and U.S.

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political contexts might appear quite different, teachers' organizations in both countries play subordinate roles in policy contexts that increasingly favour technical and standardized solutions to educational problems. Economic expansion in the U.S. and contraction in Canada influences the degree of political stress teachers' organizations currently face.

In considering how to rethink their obligations to their membership, teachers' organizations in both countries increasingly are considering professional development strategies. Like the larger society's belief that many social problems can be solved through new educational programs (Tyack, 1991; Werner, 1991), educators frequently respond to concerns about teaching, and even problems inherent to schooling more broadly, with recommendations for teachers' professional development. Teachers' organizations already have a long and varied history of providing workshops, discussion groups, and training for their members (Bascia, 1998c; McClure, 1991) -- indeed, this was the initial focus for some (Smaller, 1991) -- but now professional development is in the limelight as never before.

This focus on professional development seems driven by a several simultaneous motives. One is a genuine desire to help teachers learn to work more effectively with an increasingly linguistically, culturally, racially, and economically diverse student population. A second is the belief that teachers should play a greater and more informed role in shaping educational practice. But this latter goal also at times appears to be driven by an instrumental view of professional development. In the U.S., teacher union support for professional development activities (or at least their willingness to "trade" increases in teachers' salary and benefits for funding professional development) has been viewed for some time as an indicator of their "professionalism" more generally (e.g., Little, 1993; McDonnell & Pascal, 1988; Retsinas, 1982). Professional development connotes an organizational commitment to the notion of continuous improvement of practice that is associated with so-called "professional" occupations (Haberman, 1986; Sykes, 1986). Teachers in both countries are quite concerned about improving the public image of teaching and their own reputations as teachers' legal representatives (Bascia, 1998c).

Beyond external impression management is the belief that professional development can not only improve teachers' skills but encourage them to adopt "certain [new] values and world views" (Little, 1993, p. 129) consistent with educational reform strategies. Sometimes teachers' professional development is assumed to be the primary strategy necessary to bring about fundamental changes in the nature and quality of schooling; other structural reforms, such as formal changes in teachers' roles and responsibilities, are often accompanied by professional

development; if professional development is not forthcoming, teachers now ask for it or complain about its absence (Earl, et al., 1998).

Teachers' organizations' professional development strategies sometimes are directed at helping teachers work more effectively within systems that cannot or do not provide sufficient support for teaching. In Canadian provinces, where educational funding has decreased dramatically and the educational infrastructure has become leaner and meaner in recent years, this compensatory strategy is perhaps more obvious. But this approach is also used in the United States; for example, dozens of local teacher unions have established teacher induction and peer review programs over the past decade because of concerns about a chronic lack of support for new teachers within the formal school system (see Bascia, 1994a). In both countries, some teachers' organizations' professional development strategies focus on helping their members to respond to educational policy demands, especially when policy makers do not accompany such mandates with technical assistance or clear examples of what changes in practice should look like. Teachers' organizations increasingly are filling in the gaps resulting from educational policies that assume unrealistically simplistic, technical views of teaching and policy implementation.

But teachers' organizations can do more than merely respond to the concerns of the public and policy makers or function as alternative providers of technical assistance; they have an obligation to be responsive to their members. Teachers are critical of their organizations' sponsorship of professional development if those strategies appear as disjunctures from the sorts of support teachers believe they need -- and which are in fact their organizations' legal obligation to provide (Bascia, 1994a; McDonnell & Pascal, 1988).

This paper describes three different types of nonformal and informal professional development provided by teachers' organizations. It identifies strategies for improving the "fit" between available professional development and teachers' occupational needs. Rather than recommending a single, "best" professional development strategy, the paper emphasizes sociological and organizational factors germane to teachers' organizations themselves -- that is, it considers teachers' organizations' role in teacher socialization, the demographics of teacher organization participation, and internal structural features. These factors suggest that teachers' organizations must look within at a variety of organizational issues, and consider a wide variety of organizational strategies simultaneously. The paper draw from conceptual and empirical research on national, state/provincial and local teacher union reform activities; on teachers' perceptions of their

organizations ; and on teacher involvement with their organizations over the past decade (Bascia, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1996b, 1997, 1998c; Bascia, et al., 1997) [1].

Traditions of teacher professional development

The bare minimum. In most teachers' organizations of any size, internal organizational structure relies on discrete parallel functions. Typically, units, designated staff, or at least committees designated for professional development, sit alongside structures for collective bargaining, governmental affairs, and legal services. Professional development often has its own budget line. Professional development committees are a constitutional requirement for many local teachers' organizations in Canada and for affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA) in the U.S. Provincial, state or national offices may provide materials, speakers, ideas and funding for affiliated local organizations who seek them, but many professional development activities are locally determined.

Whatever other professional development strategies teachers' organizations provide, annual conferences are common practice. Such conferences may be a requirement of organizational franchise (they are actually mandated in Alberta's Education Act): in such cases, collective agreements (union contracts) often state that teachers will be paid for and required to attend the conferences, which often occur over 1-2 full days. The nature of these conferences vary: they may include a wide range of workshops or focus on a particular theme. Some typical foci are traditional labour concerns such as bargaining and benefits; classroom activities and teaching strategies; reform ideas; and even stress reduction techniques such as yoga and meditation. Time is often allocated for secondary teachers to focus on subject discipline-based curricular issues. Conferences may be thematically consistent with organizational policy priorities, reflect the results of teacher polls, or some combination. They often include demonstrations by renowned experts or inspirational speakers though many also rely on local (including teacher) talent.

Professional development of this type often consists of brief workshops of the traditional staff development variety: they may convey a technical conception of teaching and emphasize the transmission and easy adoption of generic skills. Teachers spend these days being talked at rather than working together, and post-workshop follow-through or connections to actual teaching practices are rare. This

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is the sort of educational strategy that some researchers contend has little impact on teaching and actually reinforces the gap between research and practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Little, 1990, 1993).

Despite these limitations, conferences appear to have some value. For teachers, such conferences may represent rare opportunities to connect with their colleagues. If connected to other professional development activities throughout the year, they provide valuable time to focus. In the stripped down educational systems of Canada, when time for professional development has been seriously reduced, they represent some of the last vestiges of contractually guaranteed professional development time.

Second generation professional development. Over the past decade, many teachers' organizations have been sponsoring new forms of professional development for their members. Because they are of a greater magnitude than can be covered by most professional development budgets, these initiatives often are undertaken in partnership with other organizations (especially district administrators or administrators' associations and schools of education) and/or funded by public education monies or philanthropic foundation grants. Whether large or small in scale, these professional development initiatives are conceptually ambitious in their intent to significantly expand teachers' skills and roles both within and beyond their own classrooms. Many such initiatives are rooted in a belief that professional development must be driven by teachers' needs to solve the practical problems with which they are confronted in their own classrooms and schools (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; also Bascia, 1994b, 1998c; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Many of these initiatives focus directly on improving classroom teaching. Beyond a number of attempts to influence the nature of initial teacher training (see Bascia, 1998c), many local teachers' organizations now sponsor teacher induction, mentoring, and peer coaching initiatives. Another example of such initiatives is the sponsorship of classroom research through the provision of time, money, access to expertise, and network administration. These programs fulfill several simultaneous purposes. The first is to help teachers move beyond technical notions of teaching and to develop more sophisticated understandings of what teaching and learning entail. Second, beyond providing direct assistance to new or "floundering" teachers, the training and practice afforded to mentors and coaches is intended to engender a "craft" (Mitchell & Kerchner, 1983), "practical" (Feiman-Nemser, 19??) or "personal-practical (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) basis for teaching

-- to increase teachers' capacity to work collegially to improve teaching and learning. These initiatives tend to direct teachers' attention to the intersections between curriculum, pedagogy, and diverse students' cognitive and social development (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Beyond these purposes, these initiatives are also intended to transform the public image of teachers' organizations from automatic defender of "incompetent" teachers to upholder of quality teaching standards (Bascia, 1994a; Kerchner, Koppich & Weeres, 1996; Kerchner & Koppich, 1993; Kerchner & Mitchell, 1988).

Another common interest of teachers' organizations is in increasing teachers' involvement in educational decision-making, particularly at the school level. Many organizations provide training in planning and group process for educators and sometimes other "stakeholders" (often parents and community members and sometimes business representatives). In some cases, this takes the form of packaged programs of the sort available to the corporate world: for example, Total Quality Management (TQM, or "Quality," in the vernacular) has had quite a following among some of the teachers' associations associated with the NEA's Learning Laboratories network (Bascia, et al., 1997). Other organizations develop their own training programs and employ a "train the trainer" model, in which cadres of teachers are trained and then in turn train other school staffs.

Second generation professional development efforts tend to acknowledge variations among district and school contexts and among teachers' interests and needs, at least to some extent. Dimensions of these initial trainings may be formulaic (e.g., how to run a meeting, how to observe and critique classroom teaching, how to conduct research), but their substance and some elements of structure allow for some degree of discretion or choice. An increasingly common practice is the establishment of school-level committees that determine how to spend their share of their district's annual professional development budget on learning activities that reflect the teachers' current interests and concerns. For example, ongoing professional development is a contractually required monthly activity for educators in Petaluma, California, but teachers can choose to establish or join the monthly study group of their choice. The Electronic Network of Ontario (ENO), a computer conferencing system established by the Ontario Teachers' Federation, is organized around topics identified by educators across the province.

Many teachers' organizations have created new committees whose primary purpose is to ensure organizational attention to educators whose social identities and status in schools is marginal. Given assurance in organizational constitutions

and guaranteed a small budget, these committees can act as organizational consciences by ensuring that such issues are not ignored in formal discussions, but also by educating teacher members more broadly through whatever professional development strategies they deem appropriate and useful. Some teachers' organizations devote some professional development efforts to helping women or racial minority teachers to achieve and succeed in leadership positions (Bascia, 1998d)

Teachers' organizations have covered important new ground with these second-generation initiatives. But these strategies often run into problems that prevent them from achieving as much as they intend. First, while teachers' organizations are paying greater attention to issues of diversity and choice for teachers, demands for accountability and adherence to standards are increasingly what drive and circumscribe teachers' choices for professional development. The external context for teachers' professional development has changed: a "third generation" of policy has begun finding their way into schools, and partnerships with government or foundations places more direct pressure on teachers' organizations and schools to comply with demands for standard responses (Bascia, 1994b, 1996a). Such external demands can entirely derail teacher organizations' professional development efforts (Bascia, 1996c; Bascia, et al., 1997). A second problem is that, while many of these professional development strategies reflect a greater sensitivity to context issues and the realities of teaching, many union leaders, like the policy-makers and administrators with whom they interact, work under a different paradigm: they are still looking for the quick fix, the generic package that promises to work uniformly well across settings. Third, second generation professional development strategies often arise from ambitious visions of a significantly different educational system, but often a lot of hope is riding on relatively small, discrete programs: these may only engage small groups of teachers or schools, and may even cause resentment or be detrimental to other educators (Bascia, 1994a, 1994b). Some union leaders speak about teachers, and often about whole school staffs, whose unwillingness to "get with the program" is a "problem." They perceive teacher "resistance" to change as a pathology rather than a possibly rational response to someone else's forced or inappropriate solution (Bailey, in press; Bascia, 1994a; Blackmore & Kenway, 1995).

Bottom up professional development. Conferences and second generation professional development strategies are essentially types of "nonformal education:" that is, "organized, systematic educational activity, carried on outside the

framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population [e.g., teachers] . . . focusing on specific, practical types of knowledge and skills of fairly immediate utility" (Coombs, 1985, pp. 23-24). But teachers encounter and create other forms of professional development through their organizations that fall outside of this "organized, systematic educational activity." Consider the following examples:

- A female teacher in southern Ontario discovers that her opportunities for administrative advancement differ from those of male teachers: "I was watching my male colleague being tapped on the shoulder and told, 'You need to get into leadership activities.' I had become very well-known within the community and yet never once did an administrator come to me the way they did to [my colleague] and say, 'You are administration material, you need to go forward, you need to take your master's degree.'" Her provincial teachers' federation provides legal support, but also an orientation to gender issues that helps her understand her experiences: "By going to [federation] meetings I was learning about the discrepancies, that there was not equity in terms of treatment and that these were sexist behaviors and unacceptable. That was very critical to my awakening, I think."

- An elementary teacher in northern California is recommended by her local union to participate in a national teaching standards development initiative. As a result of this involvement, she is subsequently invited to join a state project that helps school staffs develop plans restructure their educational programs. "I've learned so much and I'm grateful. I think about what I can give back to my district."

- A southern California secondary department chair, in mid-career and looking around for the next professional challenge, becomes a union representative for her school. Listening to teachers from all over her district talk about conditions in their schools provides her with a new and important perspective on educational programs and teachers' working conditions. "When I first came in I was a classroom teacher and all I knew was what happened to me as a classroom teacher. Then I became head of a department and so I went to different meetings and learned how the school worked together as a whole. And now through the union meeting, I learn how teachers from different sites work together as a whole. So I'm just getting a wider view of the coordination between people at different levels."

- A special education teacher becomes a union representative for her school and then vice president of her local organization. She characterizes her union involvement as a deliberate strategy of

"always trying to be on committees and be a part of the group as much as I can be. It's important for me to know what's going on but it's also for my students: if I'm respected then the students are going to be more respected [by other teachers] in their classes in the mainstream . . . There's always been special ed teachers involved in the union [in this district]."

- An elementary teacher in Ohio runs for union steward for her school because she believed her conflict resolution skills can be helpful in mediating working relationships among teachers and between teachers and administrators.

- An Ohio secondary teacher believes that the peer mediation program she initiated and ran for several years in her own school would benefit students in schools across her district. Doubtful that she can persuade district administration to support her, she worked instead through her local union, who provides the organizational sponsorship for the expansion of the program across the district.

These are all examples of what might be called "teacher leadership" (Bascia, 1997). What is important here, however, is not how unique the individuals are or how challenging their work is but how their interest in extending the breadth of their knowledge, skills, and access to the larger educational system is accomplished through their teachers' organizations. The types of learning described here include "informal" as well as "nonformal" education: that is, while some teachers make use of deliberately planned professional development activities but develop out of them broader understandings, implications, and actions than what organizers had originally intended. Other teachers learn by taking on organizational structures and roles established for other purposes than professional development, and still others initiate whole new projects. From an organizational perspective, as learning opportunities these are are "unorganized, unsystematic and even unintentional" (Coombs, 1985, p. 24); but nonetheless teachers understand them as informal opportunities to learn.

In these informal learning activities, the distinctions are blurred between, on the one hand, classroom teaching and a commitment to students and curriculum and, on the other hand, the kinds of organizational and political work typically perceived as "administration" or "leadership." As a union-active California secondary teacher said, "It's naive to think 'I'm only here for the kids, I just want to focus on my classroom and the kids and ignore all the rest of it.'" These kinds of learning take teachers outside the confines of their work as "mere" classroom teachers, and involvethem with programs, issues and with other educators in their

schools and beyond. Such learning is profound because it is multifaceted: simultaneously practical, political, and intellectual. Through such learning experiences, classroom practice can be related to the larger contexts of school practice and grounded in an understanding of the broader purposes and practices of schooling (Little, 1993, p. 138). The exposure and experience these activities provide allow teachers to move beyond the taken-for-granted familiarity of their own classrooms, students, immediate school contexts, so that the familiar context can be questioned and understood for what it is (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). They allow for meaningful intellectual, social and emotional engagement with ideas and with other teachers. Through such learning experiences, teachers discover and develop their personal strengths and competence, but they also come to understand their positional power as teachers in the larger educational system and in society.

These examples suggest the possibility of complex and multifaceted relationships between teachers' professional development activities and their "regular" work, between social, organizational and political work and classroom practice, and between teachers' organizations and their work (Bascia, 1997). This broad conception of professional development suggests that everything, or at least many kinds of involvement with teachers' organizations, can provide professional development opportunities.

What this means: Organizational strategies for professional development

The last section described the three types of professional development provided by teachers' organizations, each progressively less discrete and more intentionally consistent with teachers' felt needs to expand their skills and understandings. Staff of teachers' organizations who want to provide richer professional development experiences for more of their members must look inward at their own organizations to understand their capacity to foster meaningful teacher learning. Specifically, they must consider four interrelated issues. First, they must recognize the multiple ways their organization contributes to the socialization of teachers and shapes the possibilities for teachers' work and professional development. Second, they must recognize what kinds and how many teachers have been attracted to organizational involvement and which and how many have been, however unintentionally, uninspired or excluded. Third, they must move beyond a conceptualization of professional development as a discrete set of activities driven by one organizational unit, to a fuller understanding of how structural features throughout their organizations enable or constrain teacher learning.

Finally, they must stop searching for the single, best professional development strategy and commit themselves to a policy of multiple strategies, while acknowledging the inherent messiness and contradictions of such a plan.

Teachers' organizations and teacher socialization. In some ways, the roles that teachers' organizations play in socializing teachers with respect to their work parallel the roles schools play in preparing students for their roles in society. The formal and "hidden" curriculum of schools (not only the content of courses but also, for example, the messages contained in curriculum materials, opportunities for active learning, course availability, extracurricular activities, and streaming or tracking practices) shape students' expectations and actual life chances. Similarly, schools and school systems shape teachers' understandings of what is possible and desirable in their work through a variety of structural and cultural influences (see for example Broadfoot & Osborn, 1993; Little, 1986; Louis, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). To paraphrase Blackmore and Kenway's (1995) description of how girls are socialized, teachers learn about themselves through "contradictory and shifting webs of discourses produced by and through schools" but also through "other social and cultural institutions" -- including their own unions.

Teachers' organizations participate in teacher socialization through a variety of means. First, they help set many of the terms for teachers' work and learning in the larger district context through collective bargaining, including the scope of legitimate teaching activities within and beyond the school day, the nature of and expectations for leadership positions, participation in decision-making, and opportunities for professional development. Second, teachers' organizations contribute to the discourse about teachers and teaching through their communication with teachers and administrators and through statements they make in the press; they may reinforce or assert images of teachers as victims or heroes, technicians, intellectual workers, political activists, professionals. Third, teachers' organizations have the potential to augment and extent teachers' professional activities through the formal opportunities they provide in their own organizations and through links to district governance and other arenas beyond the district. Fourth, teachers' organizations demonstrate their relevance to teachers' work through their responsiveness and willingness to take up teachers' issues and concerns and by allowing teachers to develop new projects and initiatives through their auspices. All of these factors, and the interactions among them, contribute to teachers' occupational socialization. What teachers tend to see is not always the particular message of the union per se, but the relative dissonance or coherence of

messages, the aggregate message emanating from the combination of various regulations, statements, opportunities and conditions in various dimensions of the contexts in which they work (Bascia, 1994a; Earl, et al., 1998; Nespor, 1997; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994)).

Teachers' organizations help to define and maintain expectations for what teachers can legitimately do and know. They can participate in reproducing a narrow, technical conception of teaching -- or they can attempt to challenge prevailing norms by providing alternative visions, opportunities to develop new understandings, and opening access for teachers to the larger educational systems in which they work. In reality, unfortunately, teachers' organizations often reinforce traditional, restrictive notions of what teachers can know and do. For example, in the northeastern U.S., a local teachers' association worked with district administrators to establish district- and school-level structures so that teachers could participate in decision-making. The espoused commitment to teacher empowerment was soon undermined by an enduring pattern of "closed door" decision making sessions between teacher association leadership and district administrators (Bascia, et al., 1997). In Canada, in a period of economic scarcity and work intensification, a professional development initiative sponsored by a provincial teachers' federation was discontinued when federation leadership decided that it would be "unfair" to ask teachers to do "extra" work beyond contractually defined time and tasks. This teachers' organization effectively contributed to the narrowing of teachers' roles and the reduction of their opportunities for learning.

It is no surprise that teachers' organizations tend to parallel the structure and norms of the larger educational system. But because of their roles as teachers' organizations, it is ironic and tragic when they fail to compensate for the restriction of teachers' authority and capacity within the larger educational system. While it may be unreasonable to insist that teachers' organizations should attempt to compensate for all the problems of the larger educational system, it is equally unreasonable to assume that they cannot or should not challenge the status quo. Teachers first established their own organizations, and many teachers continue to get involved in these organizaitons them, because of felt needs to challenge the educational system's hegemonic domination (Bascia, 1998d; Carlson, 1993; Larson, 1977; Smaller, 1991).

Teachers' organizations that are serious about the professional development of their members need to recognize how their own actions contribute, through the many dimensions of the work they do as organizations, to the narrowing or

expanding teachers' authority and capacity to act. Given this understanding of teacher socialization, it seems obvious that, all things else being equal, a single simple professional development strategy could not be powerful enough to inbue teachers with the necessary "values and world view" to embrace a more empowered role. Teachers' organizations can and should do much more.

The demographics of teachers' organizational participation. The organizationally active teachers whose learning was described in the "bottom up" section are obviously unusual, a small subset of the teaching population: these are teachers who recognize opportunities in union involvement that are not obvious to the majority of their colleagues. Organizationally-involved teachers understand the value of the opportunities for learning and activity that are often uncontested because they are often invisible or even unattractive to many teachers (Bascia, 1997). Studies suggest that a number of factors distinguish these individuals from other teachers (Bascia, 1994a, 1997, 1998d) a family history of unionism so that organizational involvement is a taken-for-granted dimension of professional identity; a "critical incident" in their personal or professional lives that requires union representation and exposes them to individuals and organizational possibilities of which they were previously unaware; being personally ready for the next career challenge; belonging to a friendship group, academic department or even whole school or district where organizational involvement is the norm; a personal history of leadership activities; a sense of personal empowerment and entitlement. (In some cases, teachers have enough self-confidence to become organizationally involved even when they don't approve of union directions; as one California secondary teacher said, "I realized that the union is us, and if we're unhappy then it's our own fault, because we could be that leadership or we could be knowledgeably voting for proper leadership. We're only as powerful as we make ourselves.")

Teachers' motives are sometimes "selfish," but often they are also a reflection of their commitment to their students, to the programs for which they are responsible, and to the other teachers with whom they work. Many goals are directly related to the work they do and the contexts in which that work takes place. In teachers' organizations there often is a preponderance of teachers from certain schools and not others, more in certain subjects and programs and fewer in others. For example, some organizations have more active teachers from the elementary level while others are more heavily secondary; some have more from high-status schools, where teachers already know about the value of working the system, or more teachers from low-status schools where teachers feel they do not receive the

level of financial and moral support from the district as others. Similarly, sometimes high status subjects (such as science) are more heavily represented, while in other cases a significant proportion of union-involved teachers carry responsibilities for subjects such as industrial arts and art, which suffer from lower status than those subjects considered "essential" to a school's academic program (Goodson, 1988; Little, 1993, 1995; Siskin, 1994). Teachers with low-status students (especially special education and English as a Second Language) may be particularly sensitive to issues such as funding, scheduling, discipline, curriculum, and professional development policies -- all union issues, and issues that may be differentially available to teachers according to the status of the students and programs with which they are affiliated (Finley, 1984). Finally, traditions vary from one setting to another with respect to whether union involvement is considered the domain of men teachers, women teachers, or both (Bascia, 1998d).

These differential patterns of involvement are often quite pronounced and can lead to the perception that "the union is a 'cabal,'" driven by the agenda of a discrete group of teachers and inaccessible and unresponsive to anyone else. Organizations that want to expand teachers' opportunities for teachers' professional development must pay attention to how many and which types of teachers are active and which are not, by examining the demographics of elected leadership, active school representatives, organizational committees, and special projects. Committed organizations need to pay attention to which and whose issues are taken seriously enough to become incorporated in meeting agendas, collective bargaining sessions, to become special projects, and which are not (Bascia, 1998b; Bacharach & Mitchell, 1981). Women teachers in particular have often gotten short shrift: Harry Smaller (1991) has written about how Toronto women teachers started their own organization because the male educators who dominated the existing organization believed they had an inherent right to greater job security, opportunities for administrative advancement, and larger salaries; Marjorie Murphy (1990) has described how women teachers were laughed at on the convention floor of the American Federation of Teachers in the early 1970s for suggesting that child care, maternity leave, and equal opportunity clauses were legitimate and necessary issues for the teachers' organization to take up (Bascia, 1998d). Paying attention to the characteristics of teachers who are organizationally involved is an important dimension of understanding whether this involvement, and therefore the associated learning, perpetuates or challenges inequalities among teachers; in other words, whether "teacher leadership" is understood as the domain of a discrete cadre of teachers or as a potential state of being for teachers more generally.

Organizational structure. Teachers' organizations with a minimal interest in professional development often get by with internal structures that in some ways resemble "balkanized" secondary schools (Hargreaves, 1994; Siskin, 1994). In such organizations, staff who are associated with professional development, collective bargaining and other organizational priorities interact with distinctly different people (government officials, administrators, "teacher leaders," teachers in trouble) and maintain distinctly different views of the world. As in secondary schools, differences in world view in teachers' organizations can result in a rich program of organizational "products," but they can also be problematic. Subunits' autonomy can be challenged by the relative privilege of other units; funding can be contested and reallocated, other units can act in ways that actually undermine the efforts of the professional development unit, and professional development can be rendered ineffective and invisible in relation to the actions and publicized statements that reflect other organizational priorities. Within many contemporary teachers' organizations, the view of professional development (and other non-classroom activities) as legitimate and essential to the quality of teachers' work can collide with the belief that non-classroom work, and work not contractually specified, is "extra" or superfluous. Such differences in basic understandings can result in teachers' organizations calling for teachers to cease all but the most classroom-specific work in times of political adversity, thus reifying the existing status inequalities and unmet learning needs among teachers (see for example Robertson, 1992).

Teachers' organizations that take their professional development mandate seriously try to minimize internal balkanization by establishing shared understandings and increasing internal communication. In some U.S. teachers' organizations, professional development priorities influence collective bargaining: provisions for funding, release time, and special roles and relationships for teachers may all find their way into the substance of collective agreements; professional development may also become the focus of reform initiatives collaboratively sponsored by the teachers' organization and district-level administrators and trustees (Bascia, 1994a, 1998a; Koppich & Kerchner, 1993). Similarly, in some Canadian provinces, awareness by whole teachers' organizations of the growing number of reports to their organizations' legal units by teachers of serious conflicts with parents has prompted the development of new professional development strategies that focus on helping educators to work more effectively with parents.

Teachers' organization staff concerned with professional development in its broadest sense must consider all aspects of their organization in terms of their

impact on teachers' work and also in terms of teachers' organizational access. Consider, for example, the degree of hierarchy; the distribution of knowledge and authority not only within the formal teachers' organization but in its relationship with schools; the nature and number of formal staff positions and informal opportunities to work through the organization; and the content and frequency of formal meetings and other opportunities for teachers to learn abut each others' conditions, issues and priorities are all structural features with important consequences for teachers' access to professional learning opportunities (Bascia, 1998b; Bacharach & Mitchell, 1981). Myriad mundane details influence teachers' involvement in their organizations scheduling meeting and project times so that a wide range of teachers can participate, creating meeting structures that are conducive to discussion, structuring opportunities to develop new shared understandings and to consider divergent viewpoints. Differences in size, resource base, and complexity make important differences in organizations' abilities to provide opportunities for teacher involvement and learning. The organizational capacity of teacher unions run the entire gamut from, at one extreme, places where a single elected union officer carries out his or her duties on top of a full teaching load to, on the other hand, complex organizations where a number of dedicated staff work on a variety of initiatives and with numerous and varied opportunities and resources for teachers to use and to support the projects they initiate (Bascia, et al., 1997).

Professional development often is understood and maintained as an individual benefit available to a small number of teachers for individual and idiosyncratic reasons (Bascia, 1994b; Huberman, 1993). In contrast, it could be understood as a shared benefit, and teachers could understand their work in larger organizational and societal context. But this depends on the ability of teachers' organizations to attract a large number and range of teachers and to create mechanisms so that teachers can learn about and from each other in ways that recognize their commonalities but also are honest about their differences (Bascia, 1994a, 1994b). These understandings, in turn, will determine the ways teachers apply their learning and the extent of their impact.

Multiple strategies. There is a tendency to assume that all teachers have similar needs and interests and that what empowers one empowers all. Teachers' organizations need to recognize that teachers embody different qualities and have different needs for action and reflection in different circumstances. Teachers differ widely in their developmental needs, learning preferences, personal obligations

(and therefore time for extra-classroom activities), social status (and therefore opportunities for organizational participation), program and subject affiliation (and therefore goals or interest) as well as in school, district, and state or provincial contexts (and therefore policy pressures and workplace conditions) (Bascia, 1996b; Earl, et al., 1998; Huberman, 1993; Little, 1992; Robertson, 1992; Siskin, 1994). One type of professional development cannot possibly fit all.

Over a decade of evaluation research has consistently demonstrated that no single reform initiative provided by teachers' organizations is attractive, meaningful, and effective across a group of teachers of any diversity (Bascia, 1991, 1994a; Bascia, et al., 1997). Rather seeking out the one best strategy, teachers' organizations are better off paying attention to what teachers say, encouraging less enfranchised teachers to assert their needs, and filling a variety of vacuums and niches that various teachers identify. Teachers' organizations are more likely to foster quality professional development by allowing multiple projects to flourish, even if they are seemingly contradictory in intent.

Supporting multiple diverse strategies means allowing teachers to discover their commonalities and differences for example, enabling teachers to come together in special interest political caucuses (e.g., women, people of colour, special education teachers) as well as in cross-interest and -site groupings. It also means paying attention to the political and pedagogical implications of this work neither attempting to cover up the real differences in perspective and in organizational power that exist among teachers nor allowing overt power differences to go unquestioned and unchecked.

Conclusion

Professional development is an important agenda item for many North American teachers' organizations. This paper has reviewed the benefits and limitations of three professional development strategies employed by teachers' organizations. The first two exemplify deliberate nonformal education strategies, the first a minimal approach and the second paying greater attention to contextual variation and teacher diversity. The third type, consisting of informal learning opportunities developed by teachers themselves using various organizational structures as starting points, provides an opportunity for us to understand how teachers' organizations could provide richer professional development opportunities for larger numbers of teachers, by paying attention to the educational "spin-offs" of their own activities and organizational features the roles they play in teacher socialization, restricting or expanding acceptable and possible teacher

knowledge and action; the demographics of teacher involvement and the reproduction or challenge to inequities among teachers with respect to access to learning opportunities; and internal structural dynamics that encourage or inhibit teachers' understanding of the larger political and social context of their teaching. These factors suggest that teachers' organizations move away from policies of discrete and limited professional development events to consider a variety of organizational sites as potentially useful for teacher learning, and to enable multiple learning strategies that appeal to the whole range of teachers to whom they are responsible.

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